

2019

H. C. Hughes

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED FOR PERUSAL.

A S K E T C H

OF THE

ARISTOCRACY OF ENGLAND,

IN THE YEAR 1835,

EXTRACTED FROM TWO PAMPHLETS,

BY ISAAC TOMKINS, GENT.

AND

MR. PETER JENKINS.

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TO THE READER.

WHEN the *Aristocracy* are united in support of inveterate abuses in *Church and State*—when the people are deprived of those benefits to which they are entitled by their efforts to procure the *Reform Bill* in 1832, it is the duty of every *Reformer* to make himself acquainted with the character of that *Aristocracy*, and with their conduct; and how far it impedes the *welfare* and *happiness* of the community.

The Sketch of that *Aristocracy*, herein given, is considered to be correct, and well deserving the serious consideration of every Englishman.—It is therefore requested that every man who reads this Sketch, will persuade his neighbours to do so likewise. “Can society long remain in this most unnatural state?”

A SKETCH, &c.

THE happy audacity which has tempted the naturally cautious Tories to take office, and make one of the most desperate experiments on record, (next to that of the Charleses and Polignacs in 1830,) will advance reform by ten years, and hasten the improvement and remoulding of our Aristocratic institutions in Church and State. This consideration points out the expediency of attending a little in detail to the Aristocratic principle (and practice also) among us. The moment is favourable; and we must not lose sight of justice and of moderation merely because our triumph approaches.

The Nobility of England, though it forms the basis and the bulk, forms not the whole of our Aristocratic body. To all practical purposes we must include under that name all their immediate connexions, and even all who live in the same circles, have the same objects, and from time to time attain the same privileges. The law of the constitution is, that only a peer's eldest son succeeds to his father's honours, and therefore we constantly hear it said that all the rest of the family belong to the body of the people. Nothing can be more true as regards legal rights—nothing more false as regards political and social bias. *It is certain that the eldest son alone is deemed by our institutions to be born a lawgiver, a senator, and a judge; that he alone, be he ever so ignorant, stupid, and vicious, is allowed to decide upon the great questions of policy and of jurisprudence, and to sit in appeal upon the decisions of all the legal tribunals of the country, and to judge without review all his fellow-citizens for property, liberty, limb, and life. These high functions are so essentially inherent in him, that no bankruptcy, no idiotcy, (short of being found lunatic by commission,) no criminality, can deprive him of his judicial and legislative attributes. He may have committed felony, and been transported—or perjury, and been pilloried—or fraud, and been upon the treadmill; yet, the day after his sentence expires, he may take his seat next the Lord Chancellor or the Archbishop of Canterbury, and turn by his vote the fate of a great measure for diffusing universally the justice which he has contemned and outraged; as indeed one voice threw out the Local Courts' Bill; one peer who opposed it had stated his interests to be affected by the measure, being personally possessed of a private jurisdiction.* An act of parliament is required in such a case to disqualify the hereditary functionary; and, accordingly, a peer in Ireland, having been convicted of taking bribes to decide a cause in the*

* No charge rested on the noble lord; but it is given as an illustration. A clause in the bill had exempted his court.

House of Lords there, an act was passed to prevent him from afterwards judging, but he voted on all laws.

That all these high, precious, grievous, absurd, and revolting privileges* are confined to the eldest sons of peers is certain; it is equally certain that a more gross mistake never was committed than theirs, who for this reason affect to consider all the younger branches of noble families as equal with the rest of the people. Equal they are in law: they can only sue and be sued like their neighbours; they pay taxes like them; they cannot ride down the peasants or the shopkeepers with impunity; but so neither can the peers themselves. And yet who shall say that, except privilege of arrest from debt, and the power of sitting in parliament, and as judges, there is any real difference existing by law between the eldest son and his brothers, further than there is between a rich man and a poor? All belong to the same caste; all are alike a favoured race in the government and in society; all have advantages unknown to us of the common people; and therefore all constitute the body of the Aristocracy in fact, be the law ever so plain in the eldest son's favour.

The same remark applies to all persons who, from their fortune and education, live with the noble families habitually. They are admitted to the same familiarities; they receive the same respect from those who foolishly look up to rank, and yet more foolishly gaze at fashion; they find the avenues to power as well as distinction open to them; they are born even to a political supremacy which others earn by working for it and deserving it. What difference in society is there between a lord's second son, or indeed his eldest, and the son of a rich squire, especially if he be of old family, that is, if his father and grandfather had been squires before him? It is certainly a very great advantage of our constitution that nothing prevents men of no birth from gaining this station by their wealth, and talents, and industry; but still *they* are, in this most important particular, worse off than hereditary patricians—they have to make their way—to win their spurs; the others start on a vantage ground—they are born spurred.

The Aristocracy, then, as at present constituted, consists of all the

* This perfection of our mixed constitution (the envy of surrounding nations!) is thus described by a zealous Church-and-King man—the Tory Dean Swift—as far as decency allows an extract from the *reverend* author's work:—

“I told his honour that nobility among us was quite a different thing from the idea he had of it; that our young noblemen are bred from their childhood in idleness and luxury; that as soon as years will permit, they consume their vigour, and contract odious diseases among ****; and when their fortunes are almost ruined, they marry some woman of mean birth, disagreeable person, and unsound constitution, merely for money, whom they hate and despise; that the productions of such marriages are generally scrofulous, ricketty, and deformed children, by which means the family seldom continues above three generations, unless the wife takes care to provide a healthy father among her neighbours or domestics, in order to improve or continue the breed. . . . The imperfections of his mind run parallel with those of his body, being a composition of spleen, dulness, ignorance, caprice, sensuality, and pride. Without the consent,” adds the Dean, “of this illustrious body, no law can be enacted, repealed, or altered; and these nobles have likewise the decision of all our possessions without appeal.” No one can deny that this is a most exaggerated, and even false as well as disgusting representation. Yet this same Very Reverend Divine cants you for an hour by the clock, “on the 30th of January, 1726, being Sunday,” about “the blessed martyr,” and “the blasphemies of the Puritans, who dispensed with a House of Lords.” Verily he should have served under the present Minister, and with the supporters of the trust-worthy landed interest which has lately covered itself with such glory.

classes to which we have been referring. *That hereditary privileges are at the bottom of the whole, is not denied; that those privileges being destroyed, all the worst parts of the other evils would cease, is admitted; that whatever differences remained would only be such as wealth, and talents, and acquirements give, is alike true; and that, while property is held sacred, such distinctions are both inevitable and beneficial will hereafter be shown.* But we are now to see the consequences of that very artificial state of society which now exists—of those unnatural, those forced, and factitious differences of level into which the flood of society is driven, and closed, and dammed up—in order to ascertain how far it would be expedient to reduce the banks and restore the natural level—the natural equality—that equality which alone is wholesome.

The picture we are about to contemplate is not pleasing; it is, however, like: it has many features peculiar to the past state of things; it has some which would remain, and be as revolting as they now are, even if all artificial distinctions of rank were swept away, as long as the accumulation of property is permitted—and with that no man of sense would wish to interfere. The progress of knowledge will be the best softener of those harsher features; and when the basis of the present distinctions is gone, that remedy will prove effectual—not till then.

The question is this. A substantial farmer, or a reputable shop-keeper, intending to let two or three of his sons continue in his own business, has the spirit and the means to give one of them, who shows good abilities, a better education, that he may be a parson or a lawyer. The lad goes to Oxford, and he there meets the younger son of the squire or the nobleman, about his own age. Now which of the two finds it easiest to get on in the world? Which is soonest received into the company of men of influence in the college? Which makes his way best to notice, wherever it is of importance to him that he should obtain notice? Which has, first at college, and afterwards in town, most favour bestowed on his efforts? Which rises the fastest and mounts the highest, supposing their abilities and understanding equal? Does it not require that the obscure man should be a first-rate genius to climb the heights of his career, be that civil or military, ecclesiastical or political? In England these questions can be answered in one only way.

But suppose we come away from matters of substantial interest, and say a word of society merely. The one of the two youths whom we are supposing to be started together in life, is born to admittance every where, and to the unsolicited enjoyment of the most refined society; the other may arrive at the same favour after he has made himself famous by his talents, or powerful by his success, when the silly creatures who preside over such intercourse would feel themselves neglected if he were not found among their attendants. As for the daughter of the tradesman or the yeoman, no fancy can help us to picture her in those haunts of fashion, be she as fair as Venus, as chaste as Diana, as wise as Minerva, unless she has been able to repair the ruined fortunes of some noble rake by the legacy of an uncle in the East Indies. For the brother, parliamentary eloquence, (not learning or solid wisdom,) party devotion, or professional success, may cast a plank across the gulf which separates the circles of high and middling society. For the sister there is but one bridge, and it must be

made of solid massive gold. Passing across it, she will be admitted to the enjoyment of having her relations sneered at, and, if her ears are very acute, herself nicknamed among those whom she saves from want of bread; she will listen to the horrors of vulgar life, the atrocities of under-breeding, the hatefulness of honest industry, the misfortune of humble birth, until she dares not look about her or behind her, but is haunted by the recollection of her origin as if it had been a crime, and is brought to be more ashamed of her humble and virtuous family than if they had borne her in the hulks or bred her on the tread-mill.

“But surely,” the country or the city reader will exclaim, “there must be something extremely captivating in this fine society, which makes it so much run after, and gives it so much sway, not only over the fashion, but even over the policy of the country!” For that it does exercise such influence we cannot deny. Statesmen pass much of their time in it: they discuss their measures of a party nature before the empty women and the frivolous youths who compose it. They are not a little moved by the opinion which has dominion in these select circles; they are prevented from making useful appointments of men unknown to these arbiters and arbitresses of fashion—and therefore despised by them—but who would be still more despised if they were known, because they are men of learning and sound sense. The same statesmen are also kept from taking an interest in many good works—as in humane and philanthropic pursuits—and in supporting wise measures of improvement founded upon profound views of human nature and of man’s wants, by the same tone of ridicule with which, within these sacred precincts, all mention of such things is sure to be greeted. Lastly, as those circles are drawn round the very *focus* of all hatred and contempt for the people, they are the very hot-beds of Toryism and intolerance; nothing being more certain than that the Women of Fashion and all the young Aristocrats (perhaps more or less of all parties) hate Reform,—look down upon the people,—desire more or less openly to have a strong, arbitrary, Tory government, and would fain see the day dawn upon military power established on the ruins of the national representation.

“What, then,” our honest yeoman’s son, our worthy tradesman’s daughter, may properly ask, “What is it that gives the Aristocratic circles all this extraordinary influence; and first of all, why is the admission into Aristocratic society so very highly prized, that we of the middle classes are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and cleave unto them, if we can only, at the cost of such sacrifices, obtain admittance within their pale?”

First, it must be admitted that there is a very great, a very real charm, in those circles of society. The elegance of manners which there prevails is perfect; the taste which reigns over all is complete; the tone of conversation is highly agreeable—ininitely below that of France indeed—but still most fascinating. There is a lightness, an ease, a gaiety, which to those who have no important object in view, and who deem it the highest privilege of existence, and the utmost effort of genius, to pass the hours agreeably, must be all that is most attractive.

After this ample admission, let us add, that whoever, after passing an evening in this society, shall attempt to recollect the substance of the

conversation, will find himself engaged in a hopeless task. It would be easier to record the changes of colour in a pigeon's neck, or the series of sounds made by an Æolian harp, or the forms and hues of an *Aurora Borealis*. All is pleasing; all pretty; all serviceable in passing the time; but all unsubstantial. If man had nothing to do here below but to spend without pain or uneasiness the hours not devoted to sleep, certainly there would be no reason to complain of these *coteries*. But if he is accountable for his time, then surely he has no right to pass it thus. Compared with this, chess becomes a science; drafts and backgammon are highly respectable. Compared with this, dancing, which is exercise, and even games of romps, are rational modes of passing the hours. Compared with this, it is worthy of a rational being to read the most frivolous romance that was ever penned, or gaze upon the poorest mime that ever strutted on the stage.

The want of sense and reason which prevails in these Circles is wholly inconceivable. An ignorance of all that the more refined of the middle, or even of the lower classes, well know, is accompanied by an insulting contempt for any one who does not know any of the silly and worthless trifles which form the staple of *their* only knowledge. An entire incapacity of reasoning is twin sister to a ready and flippant and authoritative denial of all that reason has taught others. An utter impossibility of understanding what men of learning and experience have become familiar with, stalks hand in hand, insolent and exulting, with a stupid denial of truths which are all but self-evident, and are of extreme importance. Every female member of this exquisite class is under the exclusive dominion of some waiting maid, or silly young lover, or slander-mongering newspaper; and if not under the sway of one paper, lives in bodily fear of two or three. Bribes, entreaties, threats, are by turns employed to disarm these tyrants; and however tormented the wretched victim may be, she is forced by some strange fatality, or propensity, to read what most tortures her.

Indeed, the *relations* of this Aristocratic class with the press, form one of the features most illustrative of the Aristocratic character, replete as it is with all the caprice and waywardness, the unreasoning and often unfeeling propensities, the alternate fits of blindness to all danger, and alarm where all is safe; in short, all that goes to the composition of a child, and a spoiled child.

Of the press, then, they live in habitual dread; but it is a fear, which being altogether void of wisdom, produces good neither to its victims nor its objects. Frightened to death at any unfavourable allusion to themselves or their ways, they support with the most stoical indifference all attacks upon their professed principles, all opposition to the policy they fancy they approve. Furious to the pitch of Bethlem or St. Luke's, if they themselves be but touched or threatened, nothing can be more exemplary than the fortitude with which they sustain the rudest shocks that can be given to the reputation of their dearest and nearest connexions. Nay, they bear without flinching, with the patience of anchorites, and the courage of martyrs, (but that the pain is vicarious,) the most exquisite and long-continued tortures to which the feelings of their friends and relations can be subjected. This is no exaggeration; for it is below, very much below, the truth. They delight in the slander of that press, the terrors of which daily

haunt them, and nightly break their slumbers. Nothing is to them a greater enjoyment than to read all that can be said against their friends. They know, to be sure, that all is false ; but judging by themselves, they know that all of it gives pain. The public, they are quite aware, believe little of it ; for of late years the press has taken pretty good care to make its attacks very harmless in that respect ; but then they feel that those friends who are the objects of the abuse are probably as sensitive as themselves. Thus, the class we are speaking of form in reality the slander-market of the day ; and yet, with a miraculous inconsistency, they are in one everlasting chorus against “the license of the press,” which, but for them, would have no being ; but for their follies, no object ; but for their malice, no support ; but for their spiteful credulity, no dupes to work upon ; but for their existence, no chance of continuing its own. *They*, indeed, turn upon their own instruments—make war upon the tools they work with—the very limbs they sustain and move ! It is the rebellion of the members reversed ; for here we have the overgrown belly attacking the limbs ! Had the Aristocrats the power and the industry, they would indite their book “*A Good Name worthless*,” or “*The Crimes of the Press*,” but we should then expect to see “*Sermons on the Sixth Commandment, by a Receiver of Stolen Goods*.”

That their encouragement is confined to the vilest portion of the press, has long ago been affirmed, and is not denied. The respectable journals are no favourite reading of theirs. The newspaper that fearlessly defends the right ; that refuses to pander for the headlong passions of the multitude, or cater for the vicious appetites of the selecter circles ; that does its duty alike regardless of the hustings and the *boudoir* ; has little chance of lying on the satin-wood table, of being blotted with ungrammatical ill-spelt notes, half bad English, half worse French, or of being fondled by fingers that have just broken a gold-wax seal on a grass-green paper. But more especially will it be excluded, possibly extruded, from those sacred haunts of the Corinthian order, if it convey any solid instruction upon a useful or important subject, interesting to the species which the writers adorn, and the patricians do their best to degrade. Even wit the most refined finds no echo in such minds ; and if it be used in illustrating an argument or in pressing home the demonstration, (which it often may be,) the author is charged with treating a serious subject lightly, and of jesting where he should reason. Broad humour, descending to farce, is the utmost reach of their capacity ; and that is of no value in their eyes unless it raises a laugh at a friend’s expense. Some who have lived at Court, and are capable of better things, say hey carefully eschew all jests ; for princes take such things as a personal affront—as raising the joker to their own level, by calling on them to laugh with him. One kind of jest, indeed, never fails to find favour in those high latitudes—where the author is himself the subject of the merriment. Buffoonery is a denizen in all courts, but most commonly indigenous ; and after the court’s example patrician society is fashioned. It is not in the true Aristocratic circles that any one will adventure the most harmless jest who would not pass for a jacobin or a free-thinker. He may make merry with the led-captain, or the humble companion, or possibly the chaplain (though that was rather in the olden time, before

the French Revolution had taught the upper orders to pay the homage rendered by vice to virtue,* without acquiring piety or morals). Any other kind of wit rather indicates, if tolerated, that the adventurous individual has found his way thither from the lower latitudes of the liberal party.

From a contemplation of the Aristocracy, the result of sorrowful observation, not of irritable displeasure, we naturally turn to its lamentable but inevitable consequence. Can society long remain in this most unnatural state? Can the whole faculties and accomplishments of a great people be severed with impunity from the wealth, the rank, the privileges, and the personal and individual interests that exist in the state? The middle, not the upper class, are the part of the nation which is entitled to command respect, and enabled to win esteem or challenge admiration. They read, they reflect, they reason, they think for themselves; they will neither let a pope, nor a prince, nor a minister, nor a newspaper, form their opinions for them; and they will neither from views of interest nor motives of fear be made the dupe or tool of others. They are the nation—the people—in every rational or correct sense of the word. By them, through them, for them, the fabric of the government is reared, continued, designed. How long are they likely to suffer a few persons of overgrown wealth, laughable folly, and considerable profligacy, to usurp, and exclusively to hold, all consideration, all individual importance? Can the scales of society be kept steadily adjusted, when the unnatural force, violently exerted in favour of the feather, makes the unaided gold kick the beam?

Let us here at once admit the grievous error of those who complain that Aristocratic society is exclusive, and that the nobles of our land and their associates have a refined intercourse among themselves, a luxury which none besides are suffered to taste. Avowed by some, this repining is felt by many more; but it is unworthy of sensible men, and fitter for foolish people, just as empty as the patricians and less accomplished; in a word, vulgar minds who would fain enter into fine company with the view, doubtless, of keeping the door shut as soon as it had yawned to let themselves in. Let all who thus feel, (reason they do not,) reflect how little of what they complain of belongs to Aristocracy in the bad sense, that is, in the only sense in which we have any right to level it or sweep it away. The dukes and marquises, with their wives and mistresses, their girls and their lads, would form just as exclusive and as refined a circle were their titles abolished, so they retained their possessions; and, of course, no man in his senses, (no one out of the circles in question,) ever dreamt of levelling the distinctions of property, and thus plucking out the corner-stone from the fabric of society.

But the complaint that we *have* a right to make is, that those who from their very wealth, and the habits which it engenders, are naturally sufficiently insolent, become besides endowed by law and custom with special privileges of a political nature; that these infinitely augment

* *Hypocrisy*—thus described by a French writer, wit, and nobleman—indeed a duke; for in France, where, even under the absolute monarchy, the claims of letters and talents were always admitted, the nobility cultivated wit and learning, and were a race infinitely superior to our own, in proportion as literary men were admitted into their society on a footing of equality.

their natural insolence, and exasperate the badness of their habits; and that such privileges at once render the society intolerable over which they domineer, and the government insecure in which they bear sway. The £10 franchise itself would tend to produce similar mischiefs were it confined to a few, and were it of more difficult acquisition to those who inherit it not. Its great diffusion and easy attainment prevents the possibility of its working evil by creating a privileged class in the community.

Only see how the Aristocracy and the Upper House of Parliament oppress the country, and cause the mismanagement of its concerns! First, the Aristocracy, as a body, is essentially the enemy of all reform. Exceptions there are. Excellent sense in one; in another, good education for about the worst educated country in Europe; in a third, party zeal; in a fourth, personal spleen,—may alienate members of the body from their natural connexions, and enlist them in the cause of the people. For the aid of these men the country can never be too grateful. Far from repelling them by insult, and damping their generous efforts in our behalf by a cold and sullen reception, it is our duty and our interest to hail their arrival among us with open arms. They are of infinite use to us. Their motives should not be too narrowly scrutinized. They are worthy of all acceptance; and, if we know either what becomes us, or what serves us, we shall affectionately and gratefully receive them. The body at large is our foe; *that* is incapable of conversion. Mr. O'Connell may threaten and Mr. Brougham may educate for ages; that body is beyond all the fears which the former can excite, and all the improvement which the latter can produce. All their habits—all their connexions—all their interests—oppose any conversion short of what a miracle could work. The abuses of the system are not merely the protection of their order, but its direct presiding genius. For them sinecures exist; for them jobs are done. They it is that profit by the over-payment of public functionaries. They it is that amass wealth by the tax imposed upon the bread consumed, and alone consumed, by the people. For their sons an overgrown army provides commissions and staff-appointments. For their sons a bloated church establishment displays deaneries, and prebends, and bishoprics. To teach their children Tory principles, the public schools, (the best education in England, and one utterly below contempt,) train the patrician infant to lisp in slavish accents. To confirm the lessons of Eton and Winchester, Oxford opens her conservative arms, and eradicates whatever feelings of humanity, whatever reasonable opinions, the expanding faculties of the mind may have engrafted upon the barren stocks of Henry the Sixth and William of Wickham. In truth, the universities are the very forcing beds of Tory Aristocracy; and hence the peculiar jealousy with which the House of Lords, as if instinctively, regards whatever can by any possibility touch those haunts of bigotry and intolerance. The fact is, that go where you will, in these times, even in liberal circles, you find the youth—the fashionable youth—all embodied with the mothers and the tutors against liberal principles, and bent on resisting all improvement.

That the result of the whole system should give us the kind of Upper House which now assumes to govern the country, who can wonder? Upon its character and propensities there need few words

be wasted. The habitual enemies of all reform—the steady supporters of intolerant measures—the determined opposers of liberal principles—what but the apprehension of mischief has prevented them from coming to an open collision with the other House of Parliament? Until either their privileges are restricted, or their constitution is changed, the country has little chance of good government, or a continued sound legislation. No man who understands our constitution—no man who has observed the necessity that exists in it of a second chamber of Parliament to revise the acts of the first, can desire to see the House of Lords abolished. That much is required to be done before its prolonged existence can be considered either beneficial or safe to the community, no one who regards its composition, and looks back to its history, can doubt. But the object of these pages is not to point out remedies. They have been written with the view of pointing out the evil. When that is sufficiently felt, and the course it takes accurately perceived, the people will be better prepared to find out the remedy, because they will be more disposed to confess its necessity.

TO ISAAC TOMKINS, GENT.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE had the great satisfaction of reading your able and just remarks upon that Aristocracy which forms the chief bane of all Policy, as well as all Society in this country, and which tends not much more to destroy good government over us than to sap good morals among us. You deserve all our thanks for the striking exposition you have made of this prevailing evil. But why do you stop short? Why do you dwell so much on the slighter parts of the subject? What can be more insignificant to the nation at large, than the way in which Lords and Ladies spend their time at the Grandee Palaces? Let their society be ever so refined, or ever so gross—let their talk be as solid as that of rational creatures, or as silly and unsubstantial as you describe it, I care not—we and our fellow-citizens of the middle classes value not a rush the admission to that intercourse, and could well bear our perpetual exclusion from it, if that were all we had to suffer from the present Aristocratical Government of the country. I want you, therefore, to consider and to discourse upon our *real grievances*—those burdens by which the Aristocracy grind the faces of their inferiors.

Look only at the House of Commons—to take an example from what indeed lies at the root of the evil tree, whose bitter fruits we are all of us now eating. The Aristocracy represent us in Parliament; and, at the late election, as at all such times, they were clothed in fine

smooth words—full of expressions to overflowing—glittering in pledges and promises; while they smiled from ear to ear in kindness and courtesy towards us. They would take off the malt tax; and who, as Sir Roger Greisley said to the Derby gulls of farmers, who dared accuse *them* of ever breaking a promise? They would oppose Ministers, and restore reformers to power—as the Maxwells, the Michael Shaw Stewarts, the Copelands, the Richards's, the Johnstones, and I know not how many more, so solemnly vowed at the hustings. They were no party men to bring in a Whig Aristocracy, any more than to keep in a Tory one. But to reforming men and reforming measures they would look—and they would devote themselves to give cheap food to the country; and a reforming—a real reforming Ministry to the King.

Next, look at what these honest and faithful stewards have been doing ever since. They had a majority on the first vote—a strong vote indeed it was felt to be—the Speakership. What next? They did not venture to make an amendment on the Address, which was worth one farthing; they took an alteration just strong enough to disgrace the Ministers—not strong or even plain enough to help on the cause of reform one single step. Do I blame Lord John Russell for proposing so weak a thing? Far from it. He knew well the stuff his majority was made of, and that if he had made it one syllable stronger, or more intelligible, he would have been in a minority of fifty, instead of the majority of seven, which, by paring, and clipping, and weakening, he with difficulty obtained. Do not let us disguise the truth from ourselves. OUR REPRESENTATIVES HAVE DECEIVED US;—DO NOT LET US DECEIVE OURSELVES. A CONSIDERABLE MAJORITY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IS AGAINST ALL REFORM. That majority, in its heart, hates the people. Its fears are pointed to the progress of improvement; its care is for the privileged orders; its darling object is to keep all things as much as possible in their present state, and just to give us as much relief as they cannot either resist or evade giving. They do not, in substance or effect, differ from the House of Lords, which is their natural ally, and their only lawful superior, to whose interests they are quite willing to sacrifice their constituents at any moment they can do it in safety. The Lords will not oppose a reform, when they are afraid of being swept away if they do. The bulk of the Commons—a majority of 100 at the least—will let reform pass, which they dare not resist without being sure of losing their seats. Do I, or does any body, think the Lords friendly to any kind of reform, merely because they let some reforms pass? Not at all: they do it because they cannot help it. Does any one dream that above 200, or at most 250, of the Commons really love reform, merely because the other reformers, the merely *nominal liberals*, do not dare throw out reform bills and motions? Not a bit of it: they hate reform bitterly—hate it for its own sake—hate it for their sakes—hate it for the sake of the House of Lords, whom they really love, and where most of them hope to sit. But they fear us as well as detest us, and they must vote whether they will or no on many questions. Only see the effects of this. It is like the argument of *measures not men*. Those members only give us just as much support and protection as they cannot possibly withhold; and in all other cases they refuse to stir for us. Hence neither

Lord John Russell could frame an amendment worth a straw, excepting for merely party purposes ; nor could Mr. Hume support the people's most important right, to stop supplies till grievances were redressed. Hence all motions of any value are put off, because there is a struggle to turn out one set of Aristocrats, and put another in their place. Hence, if the hearts of a very large majority of the House, and even a considerable number of the opposition, were opened, and we could endure so hideous a sight—we should find not one trace of the country's good—not one vestige of the people's welfare—not the faintest impression of the public opinion—but all would be heats, hatreds, furies, fears, (not a reflection of the public wishes,) about selfish objects, never rising nearer to the tone and temper of patriotism than so far as party feeling now and then borrows its hues for an ornament, and wears its garb for a disguise. Those men who I know are the majority of the House—who I am almost certain are some of the opposition—vote from a fifth to a fourth because they dread the loss of their seats, some because there are places which they possess or expect. They will try to patch up an expiring and impossible Ministry, or to hatch a middle scheme to gratify jobbers, and frustrate all the hopes of the country, or make a new cabinet altogether ; in which it is a hundred to one that we, the people, shall hardly find any men who are thoroughly disposed to do us justice, and whose heart is in the work of helping the people. I do not blame those men,—the chiefs of the liberal and popular portion of the Whig party ; on the contrary, I feel the debt of gratitude we owe them. But what can they do with such a system ? They dare not break with the Aristocracy, to which almost all of them—more than nine in every ten—actually belong ; they dare not fly in the face of the Court, which, as things are now arranged, may turn out a Ministry without notice, and without the least reason assigned ; and, after plunging the country in confusion, retreat and suffer no kind of penalty or even inconvenience from its intrigue. They cannot work miracles in such a House of Commons, or make bricks without straw. They could not act for our true interests, even if they really felt as they ought, and actually wished what we desire ; because they are only supported by a mixed body in the House of Commons, and opposed by a very determined and interested mass of steady, unflinching, unscrupulous enemies to all reform. *Our* friends are the minority ; and the rest of the opposition, who in case of a change will be the ministerial body, is composed of men in whom the country never can again place any trust ; because they have got into Parliament under false pretences ; wheedling us one day with promises of strong votes, and breaking these promises the next ; gaining their seats by pledges of reform, and forfeiting those pledges the moment they were sworn in.

It is easy to declaim against such men as your Greisleys and Hall Dares—your Bingham Barings and your Pechels. Whose fault was it that the son of a Tory minister was chosen on promise of voting with the liberals ?—Whose but the liberals of Winchester, who preferred the man that gave out he should oppose his own father, to the man that had faithfully served them before ?—Whose fault was it that Captain Pechel turned out Mr. Faithful ?—Whose but the Brighton liberals, who opposed an honest Tory, and preferred to an honest re-

former a man notoriously receiving pay as a servant in the King's household? Nobody can pity either Winchester or Brighton. They have met exactly what their silly conduct, to call it no worse, deserves. Winchester is wholly inexcusable, for it had been treated in the same way before by the same individual.

But the persons whom we really have a right to complain of, and whom all honest men must blame, and all men of spirit despise, are the forty or fifty pretended liberals, who have not gone over openly to the enemy. *These rotten members are the true cause of all the mischief that is befalling us.* They will possibly make it impracticable to form a good liberal Ministry: they will almost certainly cause any Government that is formed to be ill constructed,—patched of feeble men,—unpopular statesmen, and puny reformers, if reformers at all; and they will assuredly make it quite impossible for even such a Ministry to last; so that we shall be driven very soon back to the Tories; and that vile and intolerable dominion will be perpetuated over us to the lasting disgrace of the country.

What remedy is there? The people must be on their guard: they must require their representatives to act like honest men, if they are not so. The people must keep a jealous eye on all that those men do in Parliament. A fit motion, by Mr. Hume or Mr. O'Connell, to separate the wheat from the chaff, and show the country before another election which of those that cry out "*Reform*" are really reformers, is much wanted. By its result let the eye of the people be steadily and constantly directed to watch the conduct of the time-servers and waverers, and ready to do them justice.

Then, above all, let the people carefully attend to the new ministry which shall be formed, if indeed any can now be gotten together. Let all eyes be upon their conduct, and let no fear of driving them out again be suffered to suspend our admonitions, and our opposition to them; nor any apprehensions of their joining in whole or in part the Tory liberals, as some call the less rancorous of the Court party. Let them join, in God's name,—so much the better for the country. The people must rally round those faithful men who are their real friends—who will never take office to hamper their exertions—who have even no relish, and some of them no capacity, for office, but who will be always ready to stand in the breach and fight the battles of reform.

Your true friend,

PETER JENKINS.